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SENATE BILL 556

**49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009**

INTRODUCED BY

Gerald P. Ortiz y Pino

AN ACT

RELATING TO EXECUTIVE REORGANIZATION; CREATING THE OFFICE OF  
PEACE; PROVIDING POWERS AND DUTIES; CREATING THE CITIZENS PEACE  
ADVISORY COUNCIL; MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

Section 1. SHORT TITLE.--This act may be cited as the  
"Office of Peace Act".

Section 2. PURPOSE.--The purpose of the Office of Peace  
Act is to establish an office dedicated to peacemaking, social  
justice and human rights; training that will enable the  
prevention, management and resolution of conflict without  
violence; and the study and implementation of conditions and  
appropriate educational curricula at all levels that are  
conducive to a culture of peace.

Section 3. DEFINITIONS.--As used in the Office of Peace

1 Act:

2 A. "council" means the citizens peace advisory  
3 council;

4 B. "dialogue" means a facilitated process of a  
5 group of people taking turns talking and listening to each  
6 other to allow an exchange of diverse ideas, opinions and  
7 experiences and to foster greater understanding between people;

8 C. "director" means the director of the office; and

9 D. "office" means the office of peace.

10 Section 4. OFFICE ESTABLISHED.--The "office of peace" is  
11 created. The office is administratively attached to the  
12 department of finance and administration. For purposes of this  
13 section, the term "administratively attached" has the meaning  
14 specified in Section 9-1-7 NMSA 1978.

15 Section 5. DIRECTOR--APPOINTMENT.--

16 A. The administrative head of the office is the  
17 "director of the office of peace", who shall be appointed by  
18 the governor with the consent of the senate.

19 B. The director shall be an administrator who has  
20 shown successful administrative experience and has no fewer  
21 than eighty hours of training in alternative dispute  
22 resolution, mediation and dialogue and at least two years of  
23 experience in applying these skills in a community setting or  
24 equivalent life experience.

25 C. The director shall serve and have all the

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1 duties, responsibilities and authority of the office during the  
2 time prior to final action by the senate confirming or  
3 rejecting the appointment.

4 Section 6. DIRECTOR--DUTIES.--

5 A. The director is responsible to the governor for  
6 the operation of the office. The director shall manage all  
7 operations of the office. The director may employ professional  
8 and clerical assistance, contractors and general counsel as  
9 deemed necessary and oversee staff performance, setting  
10 priorities within time and budget constraints. The director  
11 may accept grants and gifts on behalf of the office. The  
12 director shall apply the resources and skills of the office to  
13 the following areas: prevention, management and resolution of  
14 conflict; public education on peace and nonviolence; the study  
15 and promotion of social, environmental and economic conditions  
16 that create a culture of peace; and curriculum development.

17 B. In regard to the prevention, management and  
18 resolution of conflict, the director shall:

19 (1) assist in the organization of and  
20 participation in public dialogues throughout the state,  
21 providing a diplomatic method for addressing controversial  
22 issues and conflicts;

23 (2) assist in the analysis and growth of  
24 existing policies and programs and develop new approaches and  
25 encourage innovation, in collaboration and coordination with

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1 established institutional and agency efforts and  
2 nongovernmental organizations, including alternative dispute  
3 resolution centers, statewide peace studies programs, statewide  
4 peace and justice centers and public school peer mediation  
5 programs, for preventing, managing and resolving social  
6 conflict, including:

7 (a) spouse abuse, child abuse and  
8 mistreatment of the elderly;

9 (b) crime, punishment, rehabilitation  
10 and pursuit of restorative justice;

11 (c) school and gang violence;

12 (d) hate crimes, such as racial and  
13 ethnic violence and violence based on sexual orientation;

14 (e) disputes between the police and  
15 community members;

16 (f) natural resource disputes within and  
17 between communities; and

18 (g) disputes within and between  
19 government agencies; and

20 (3) assist in establishing community-based  
21 violence prevention programs, including violence prevention  
22 counseling and peer mediation and dialogues in schools, and  
23 peaceful settlement programs for police and other public safety  
24 officers.

25 C. In regard to public education on peace and

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1 nonviolence, the director shall:

2 (1) work with state-based agencies, academic  
3 resources and nongovernmental entities to develop a peace  
4 education curriculum, which shall include the study of:

5 (a) the constitutions of the United  
6 States and New Mexico and the Universal Declaration of Human  
7 Rights adopted by the general assembly of the United Nations in  
8 1948 to develop understanding as to how these documents serve  
9 the interests of peace;

10 (b) historical advancements in the  
11 peace, civil, social justice and human rights movements in the  
12 United States and throughout the world, with special emphasis  
13 on how individual and group commitment to nonviolence has  
14 contributed to advancements in the interests of peace and  
15 justice; and

16 (c) peace agreements and circumstances  
17 in which peaceful intervention has succeeded in stopping  
18 conflict;

19 (2) cooperate with the secretary of public  
20 education and superintendents of New Mexico public school  
21 districts to develop and make available curricula and  
22 supporting materials for use in school districts to facilitate  
23 instruction in peaceful conflict resolution, peace awareness  
24 and other peace objectives at public schools or any combination  
25 of public schools in a school district;

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1 (3) help integrate the peace education  
2 curriculum into the training programs for new and experienced  
3 teachers and recommend peace studies courses as part of teacher  
4 education in New Mexico; and

5 (4) provide peace education grants for the  
6 creation and expansion of peace studies programs and practice  
7 at all educational levels.

8 D. In regard to the study and promotion of social,  
9 environmental and economic conditions that create a culture of  
10 peace, the director shall:

11 (1) promote counseling and community support  
12 on behalf of victims of violence and for family members of  
13 perpetrators of violence;

14 (2) develop and support community-based  
15 strategies for celebrating diversity to promote tolerance and  
16 understanding among the diverse people in New Mexico and to  
17 help reduce racial and class tension;

18 (3) create a community peace block grant  
19 program to provide grants to nonviolent conflict resolution  
20 programs and local nongovernmental peace-building initiatives;  
21 and

22 (4) study and promote a sustainable, life-  
23 affirming economy that puts people and justice first, as an  
24 essential avenue to peace and security, including:

25 (a) offering nonviolent conflict

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1 resolution strategies on issues that threaten community well-  
2 being and security and disputes concerning wise use of water  
3 and other natural resources and protection of the environment;

4 (b) promoting renewable, sustainable  
5 technologies; and

6 (c) encouraging the conservation and  
7 restoration of natural resources to prevent future conflicts  
8 stemming from resource scarcity and environmental  
9 contamination.

10 E. In regard to public information, the director  
11 shall:

12 (1) gather information on effective community  
13 peace-building activities and disseminate the information;

14 (2) make studies available to the public that  
15 address the role of the media as it affects the escalation or  
16 recession of conflict;

17 (3) publish information on the activities of  
18 the office and encourage scholarly participation; and

19 (4) sponsor and organize conferences to create  
20 awareness of the office's findings and promote a forum for  
21 discussing peace issues and studies and exploring the meaning  
22 and practice of peace in the lives of New Mexicans.

23 Section 7. COUNCIL--CREATION--MEMBERS--RESPONSIBILITIES--  
24 COMPENSATION.--

25 A. The "citizens peace advisory council" is created

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1 and shall be composed of the director and eleven appointed  
2 members as follows, who reflect the multicultural, gender,  
3 economic, geographic and political diversity of the people of  
4 New Mexico:

5 (1) two representatives from established state  
6 or local peace advocacy organizations, appointed by the  
7 director;

8 (2) one representative from the New Mexico  
9 conference of churches, appointed by that organization's body;

10 (3) one representative from a local, county or  
11 state law enforcement agency who has specialized in violence  
12 prevention, appointed by the secretary of public safety;

13 (4) one health professional with expertise in  
14 behavioral and public health issues, appointed by the secretary  
15 of health;

16 (5) one representative from the New Mexico  
17 mediation association, appointed by that organization's body;

18 (6) one veteran who has served in an armed  
19 conflict, appointed by the secretary of veterans' services;

20 (7) one public school educator with knowledge  
21 of peace curriculum development, appointed by the secretary of  
22 public education;

23 (8) one representative of the university of  
24 New Mexico's peace studies program, appointed by that program's  
25 body;

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1 (9) one youth representative, between the ages  
2 of fifteen and twenty-four years, appointed by the lieutenant  
3 governor; and

4 (10) one member appointed by the secretary of  
5 Indian affairs.

6 B. The term of service of appointed council members  
7 shall be four years. The initial terms shall be staggered.  
8 The terms of six members shall expire at the end of the initial  
9 two years, and the terms of five members shall expire at the  
10 end of the initial four years. The initial terms shall be  
11 selected by random drawing. An appointed citizen member of the  
12 council shall not serve more than two full terms. In the event  
13 of a vacancy on the council, a new member shall be appointed by  
14 the original appointing authority for the unexpired term.

15 C. The council shall select a chair, a vice chair  
16 and other officers as it deems necessary.

17 D. The council shall meet no less than twice  
18 annually and may meet more frequently upon the call of the  
19 chair. The council shall:

20 (1) use the dialogue process in its  
21 interactions with each other and the staff;

22 (2) provide assistance and make  
23 recommendations to the director and the governor concerning  
24 peace-related policies and practices;

25 (3) annually, assess peace-related activities

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1 in the state and submit a report to the director and the  
2 governor reviewing the impact of state peace activities on  
3 governmental entities and communities; and

4 (4) publicize and allot time to receive and  
5 report citizen input at regular council meetings, maintaining a  
6 grassroots connection with the citizens of New Mexico.

7 E. Council members shall receive per diem and  
8 mileage as provided for nonsalaried public officers in the Per  
9 Diem and Mileage Act and shall receive no other compensation,  
10 perquisite or allowance.

11 Section 8. OFFICE LOGO.--The official logo of the office  
12 is an ancient universal symbol most recently copyrighted in  
13 1935 by artist Nicholas Roerich to symbolize an international  
14 pact for the preservation of culture during times of violent  
15 conflict. The Roerich museum in New York City has granted  
16 permission to any state creating a department or office of  
17 peace the right to use this symbol. The office shall use this  
18 logo on appropriate correspondence and publications.

19 Section 9. APPROPRIATION.--Sixty thousand dollars  
20 (\$60,000) is appropriated from the general fund to the office  
21 of peace for expenditure in fiscal years 2010 and 2011 to carry  
22 out the provisions of the Office of Peace Act. Any unexpended  
23 or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year  
24 2011 shall revert to the general fund.

25 Section 10. EFFECTIVE DATE.--The effective date of the

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1 provisions of this act is July 1, 2009.

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